

REFORM OR RUIN : TAKE YOUR CHOICE!

IN WHICH
The Conduct of the King :
THE PARLIAMENT,
THE
MINISTRY,
THE OPPOSITION,
THE
NOBILITY AND GENTRY,
THE BISHOPS AND CLERGY,
&c. &c. &c.
IS CONSIDERED.

AND
THAT REFORM POINTED OUT,
WHICH
ALONE CAN SAVE THE COUNTRY!

~~BY JOHN BOWDLER, ESQ.~~
BY JOHN BOWDLER, ESQ.

THE EIGHTH EDITION.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. HATCHARD, PICCADILLY;
F. AND C. RIVINGTON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD,
AND FOR STUART CHEYNE, EDINBURGH.

1798.

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TO
HIS GRACE
THE LORD ARCHBISHOP
OF
CANTERBURY.

May it please Your GRACE:

WHEN I solicited Permission to prefix your GRACE's Name to this small Tract, my Object was—to convince my Readers, that the PRINCIPLES therein contained, are GENUINE DOCTRINES of the CHURCH of ENGLAND; and that the CLERGY of *that* CHURCH do not think their Province invaded, by the EFFORTS of LAYMEN in the CAUSE of RELIGION.

I have the Honor to subscribe myself,

Your GRACE's

Dutiful and obedient humble Servant,

JOHN BOWDLER.

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REFORM OR RUIN :

TAKE YOUR CHOICE !

I AM a freeborn Briton, and an independent man : I have no Place or Pension ; I never was at Court, nor ever intend to go there ; I know neither the Ministers, nor those who oppose them. But I have a right to think and speak for myself, and will do so ; and I call upon all true Britons to hear what I have to say, and then judge for themselves.

This Country has often been in great danger, but never in greater than now.

Thousands of our Countrymen have perished by the Sword, and still more by Disease.

Millions and millions of Money have been spent. Even our Public Credit, of which we

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boasted

boasted so much, has been shaken. Stocks never were lower. Our Debt never was so great. Our Tars, of whom we were so proud, have made our hearts ake—And so have our Fellow-Subjects in Ireland.

I allow we have had great Success. We have taken many fine Islands and Colonies from our Enemies. We have beat their Fleets, whenever we could find them ; and taken or destroyed half their Navy. And what is very remarkable, scarce a Ship of War of ours has been taken ; *and not one foot of British Land has been lost, in any part of the World !*

I admit, also, that our Enemies are more distressed than we are. That the French are the most wretched People under the Sun. Their King, their Queen, and all the Royal Family, have either been put to death, or driven into foreign Countries ; and so have their Nobility, and the greatest and best part of their Clergy. A vast number of persons of all ranks, Men, Women, and Children, have been beheaded, shot, drowned, stabbed, and poisoned. Many have fled, and dare not return ; and of those
who

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who remain, a great part have lost their Property, and all the comforts and conveniences of Life. Religion, Law, Order, and good Government, seem at an end amongst them.

In Spain, the case is not much better. Being divided into two Parties, one betrayed the other to the French, who compelled them to declare War against us; and the consequence is, they have been beat most dreadfully, and, if they dare, would cut the throats of all the Frenchmen in their Country.

The Dutch are still worse off. Their Trade is destroyed; their Colonies are in our hands; the French have drained them of their Money, their Goods, and almost every thing they had. And by French Troops placed in all their strong Towns, they are forced to fit out Ships to fight against us, when they had rather by half fight for us.

But what are we the better for all this? In spite of the dreadful things that have happened to our Enemies; in spite of all the Conquests we have made, and the Ships we have taken; what

is our State at this hour? We are threatened with Invasions and Insurrections ; we are loaded with Debts and Taxes ; we are divided and weakened by parties ; we are sunk in Gloom and Despair. And yet, that French Fleet, which was intended to invade us, was dispersed, and the object of the expedition completely defeated. A Body of Troops, which actually landed, were instantly taken Prisoners. The Acts passed against Seditious Meetings, seemed to suppress them. The Merchants and Traders supported our tottering Credit. A plentiful Harvest put an end to a want of Corn, which came very near to a Famine. And let any man travel from one end of the Island to the other, with his eyes open and his ears shut, and he will see every mark of Plenty and Prosperity ; every Village flourishing and improving ; and every Field in a better state, and producing more than it ever did before. But let him take the same journey with his eyes shut, and his ears open, and he will hear many Persons talk of nothing but Grievances and Oppressions, War and Ruin.

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Now, what is the meaning of all this?—How comes it to pass, after all our wonderful Escapes, after all our glorious Victories; in the midst of so much Plenty and seeming Prosperity; that we not only think ourselves upon the brink of Ruin, but perhaps really are so? The answer is plain and short—*We are not reformed.* A thorough Reform would set all right, and restore us to Peace and Happiness. But what is *that* Reform which will do this great good? To answer this question is my object in writing.—Some think, a Reform in Parliament will alone be sufficient; and that Reform to consist only in the Members being chosen in a different manner.—Some are for lessening the Power of the Crown.—Some for abolishing Tythes.—Some for making an immediate Peace with France.—Some (though they have not courage to speak out) are for establishing a Republic on the French plan. All these, except the last, are paltry, partial Reforms, which can do little good, and may do much mischief.

If every man in the Kingdom had a Vote for a Member of Parliament, what would be

be the consequence?—Why each Member would be chosen by a Mob. And whom would a Mob choose?—Why the man that made the loudest Speech, and the largest Promises. And who would this be?—Why he, that, having neither Property nor Character to lose, was ready to say any thing to get into the House, in hopes of being paid for breaking every Promise he had made.

As to lessening the Power of the Crown, we have tried that already, and therefore can judge what the effect would be. Every body knows, that no Man can govern Ten Millions of People, without some Power. And if he has not lawful Power enough to govern them by ; either he won't be able to govern them at all, and there can be nothing but Confusion and Mischief ; or else he must govern them by unlawful Means. And I appeal to any Man of common sense, whether it is not better, that a King should govern according to fixed and settled Laws, which are known to all the Nation ; than by undue Influence, Bribery, Corruption, and the like.

But

But say some,—Reform the Church, and abolish Tithes. I hope to shew presently how the Church ought to be reformed: in the mean time I will only say, that, unless it *be* reformed, and speedily too, it is all over with us. But, as to abolishing Tithes, I fear that won't answer; for the Tithes belong to the Clergy, and I have no faith in Wrong and Robbery. Besides, remember what the Devonshire Farmer said at the Meeting: He asked, who were to have the Tithes when they were taken from the Parsons; and being told they would be the Landlord's; then, said he, " I had rather they should *bide as they be*; For I can always deal better with the Parson, than I can with my landlord."

As for a Republic on the French plan, we may excuse those who wish for it, if they are rather shy on the subject; because, if they were not, they might be in danger of a rope. For my part, I really do not wish for it:

First, Because (as I said before) I have no faith in Wrong and Robbery; and a King has as good a right to his Crown, as I have to my Cottage:

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Secondly, The People here don't seem to like a Republic :

Thirdly, I never yet read of a Republic that I should like to live under : And,

Fourthly, One may buy gold too dear.

It was said the French Revolution would make the French Nation free and happy : But it has now gone on for seven or eight years, and produced Confusion, Oppression, Cruelty, Poverty, all sorts of Mischief and Wickedness, and no good whatever. And if we are all to have our throats cut, that our Grandchildren may be free and happy ; I think that is buying gold too dear.

I trust I have now shewn that none of the above Plans will answer our purpose : Let us, then, look for one that will But, (that I may not be taken for a Quack Doctor) before I prescribe the *Cure*, let me try to find out the *Cause*, of our present unhappy state. And in order so to do, let us take a short view of all Ranks of People in this Island ; and let us begin with the highest.

Of the KING, if I knew ever so many bad things, I should be cautious how I mentioned them ;

them ; because I have no inclination to be hanged or transported. But, in truth, I know no harm of him. His private Life every body says is good—and, I think, his public Conduct has been good also. He has been guilty of no Cruelty or Oppression, that I know of. In the course of his long Reign, our Liberty has been increased and secured. He has encouraged Arts and Manufactures, and promoted learned and ingenious Men. So that I believe we may fairly call him one of our best Kings.

Having no more desire to see the inside of Newgate, than to try the air of Botany Bay, I shall always be cautious what I say about the Parliament. It has passed many good Laws : And though there have been some strong ones of late, I am afraid the times required them, and that our Constitution could not have been preserved without such.

I will, however, beg leave to ask two or three short questions ;—and let those whom the cap fits, wear it :

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When the Law forbids Bribery, can it be right to bribe?

When a Man undertakes to act for others, can it be right to neglect his Trust?

When acting for others, ought we to consider *their* interest or *our own*?

As for the Ministry, I allow that they conducted Affairs very well, till the War began:— I allow, too, that we have had great Successes. But yet I am not convinced that things might not have been managed better, and at less Expense. I should, however, be more ready to blame Ministers, if I were not convinced that they have been prevented doing their best by the Opposition. And now my patience begins to fail me:—For what can be more provoking to any Man who really loves his Country, than to see Men pretending to love their Country and to wish to save it, and yet—instead of doing all in their power to help things forward—doing all in their power to hinder every measure proposed; and at last quitting their Posts, at the very moment when (as they themselves allow)

allow) the Country is in the utmost danger possible?—And let any Man read the Speeches, which have been put into the Papers as those of the heads of the Opposition ; and consider the conduct of the Irish, the Seamen, &c. ; and then say, whether those Speeches did not occasion much of the Mischief which has happened ?

Look at the conduct of the Nobility, and Gentry in general (including the Officers of the Army and Navy, and the higher classes of Law, Physic, and Commerce). Thank God ! you will find among them some excellent people ; and in general they are willing to assist the Poor, and not to oppress them. But do not Luxury, Corruption, Adultery, Gaming, Pride, Vanity, Idleness, Extravagance, and Dissipation, prevail too generally ? Or, are they diligently employed, as they ought to be, either in the service of their King and Country, or in regulating their own Families and their Neighbours, in those places where their property lies ?

Of the Bishops and Clergy, I should be very sorry to say any thing that might lessen them in

the eyes of the Nation ; for if we are to be preserved, it must be by their means.

The Bishops are in general learned and good Men ; and much are we indebted to the King, for setting such at the head of the Church. They take more pains, and have more work to do, than is commonly supposed. Yet if St. PAUL were among them, I think he would work harder than any of them, and adopt some stronger measures to bring back to their duty, such Clergymen, as have deserted it : For, (sorry I am to say it) though you will find many among the lower Clergy who do their Duty, and take care of their Flocks ; you will find too many, also, who neglect both, and spend their time in Public Places ; in Dancing, or Card-Playing ; or dangling at Court, or elsewhere, in hopes of preferment.—If such believe in a Day of Reckoning ; I can only say, they have a sort of Courage which I have not.

Among the Lawyers, Merchants, Traders, Farmers, and others engaged in Business ; we find many honest, generous, and charitable men ;
and

and many dishonest, profligate, or covetous characters. But do we not find almost all of them as much engrossed by worldly Business, or Cares, or Amusements, as if they were to live here for ever?

Lastly, look at the Lower Classes:—And, though (after due allowance for their little instruction and few advantages) they are, perhaps, less guilty, than those of higher Rank; yet, Are they as honest, sober, and, industrious, as they ought to be! Are they ready to obey those who have a right to command them? Do they spend all they earn in feeding and clothing themselves and their Wives and Families? and do they earn all they can? Are the Sundays spent at Church, or at the Alehouse?—abroad, in bad Company, or at home, with their Families? Do they instruct their children themselves; or accept, with hearty thanks, those instructions which are provided for them by the bounty of their neighbours?

Having now turned our eyes on the various Classes of which this Nation is composed; can we be at a loss to know what that Reform is, which our case requires?—surely, No. It is as plain,

plain, as plain can be, that the Reform we want, and the only Reform which can save us, (but which certainly will save us, if adopted in time) is

—A THOROUGH REFORM OF PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES, AMONG ALL RANKS OF PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE KINGDOM !

Let the King and Queen continue to set an example of Piety, Regularity, Sobriety, and conjugal Fidelity, to their Children, their Servants, and all their Subjects. Let them drive from their Councils, and their Court, all Adulterers and Adulteresses ; all Gamblers ; all, in short, whose Characters are notoriously *bad*, of either Sex, and of every Rank.

Let them avoid even *innocent* Amusements, if liable to produce Immorality among others : which, alas ! is too often the case.

“ Oh hard condition, twin-born with Greatness !

“ What infinite Heart's-ease must KINGS neglect,

“ The private Men enjoy !”

I can take my Sunday evening's walk, chat with my Neighbours, and view the beauties of Nature ; and no harm done. But if my gracious
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Sovereign could see but a small part of the Confusion, Idleness, Drunkenness, Dis-regard of the Sabbath, and other incalculable ill effects, which are produced, not only in Windsor, Eton, and the whole Neighbourhood, but even in his Capital itself, by his merely appearing on Windsor Terrace ; how gladly would he give up for the good of his People, that heart-felt Satisfaction, which he has so often felt, from—" Reading his History in a Nation's Eyes !"

Let every Member of Parliament, whether Peer or Commoner, reflect on the awful Trust committed to his care, and attend diligently to the execution of it. Not merely when a political dispute arises, but constantly and uniformly. Let no Act receive its fiat, without a strict scrutiny into its Merits. Let them revise, curtail, and methodise the whole code of Statute Law ; whose bulk and confusion is such, that I fear we may almost say

—" Mole ruit suâ !"

If but a small part of that time, and those talents, which are wasted in long-winded harangues, and bitter disputations, were thus applied ;

plied ; our Laws would require clearness, precision, and vigour. The number, the length, and the expence of our Suits, would no more be the reproach of our Nation. Imagination itself can hardly embrace the variety and the magnitude of the national Benefits, which would be thereby produced.

Let those, to whom the Administration of the Executive Government is committed, learn, by dear-bought and fatal Experience, that their own Arm cannot save them ; and that human Laws and human Power can avail nothing, without sound Principles and pure Morals ; and let them, therefore, without delay, bend the whole force of their talents to the promoting of these.

As for those, who, from motives of personal Ambition, Advancement, or Gain ; from private Pique, or party-prejudice, or any other sinister design ; are ready to sacrifice the public good to their private views ; it is vain to waste words on them,—their Consciences must be seared with a hot iron.

To those, on whom Providence has bestowed Rank, Honour, Wealth, or any useful

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Talent ; and who have not quite forgot who is the Giver of all good Gifts ; I next address myself : earnestly entreating them to withdraw their minds, for one moment, from all other pursuits ; and to consider their own situation, and that of their Country and of the surrounding Nations. Where are now the Rank, the Honours, and the Wealth, of France, of Flanders, of Holland, and of Italy ? And where must those of Britain shortly be ; if their possessors will neither take warning from the fate of others, nor from the Judgments of Heaven, just ready to fall on their own heads ? It is yet in their power to save their Country, and their own Souls ; but not a moment must be lost. Let them instantly quit the Dice-Box, the Turf, and the Tavern ; every wicked, and every trifling employment ; and repair each to his proper Station. Let them reform, first Themselves, their Expences, their Wives and Children, their Servants and Dependents ; and then exert all their influence, as Landlords, as Magistrates, as Friends, and as Neighbours ; encouraging and protecting the sober and in-

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dustrious ;

industrious ; discouraging and punishing, with Candour, but with Vigour, the lawless and profligate. Few of those, to whom I am now speaking, are aware how much mischief they occasion, merely by being in a *wrong Place* ; or how much good they *must* do, if they would only stay where their Lot has fallen. It was the observation of a man of much good sense and experience,—“ That, if every Gentleman would reside on his Estate, and every Clergyman on his Living, we should need no other Reformation.” Let those, then, who fly to Towns and Cities, to public Places, or foreign Countries, in search of paltry amusements ; or under a false pretext, or at best a mistaken notion, of repairing their shattered fortunes ; no longer think themselves *guiltless*.—Numberless are the ways in which their Country is injured by their absence : If resident at their Family-Seats, their Example, their Influence, their Fortune, every Talent they possess, dispenses Blessings on all around them. In any other place, they almost unavoidably do Mischief, by adding to the number of those whom the Vices of Cities inevitably corrupt.

But

But if purer motives cannot prevail, let Pride plead the cause of Patriotism. It has been often said, that an English Country-Gentleman is the First Character in the World:—and truly, when we view him seated in the Mansion of his Ancestors; surrounded by his Family, his Relations, his Servants, his Workmen, his Tenants, and his Neighbours; all, in their due proportion, partaking of his Hospitality and Benevolence!—where shall we find a more enviable object? But merely shift the scene, and place him in a dirty Lodging, in one of the long and gloomy Streets of the Metropolis:—where now are his Honours, his Influence, his Respectability?—All vanished and gone! He becomes at once a mere Cypher, without use or value: his next neighbour knows him not; and that Income, which before procured him and others so much solid and substantial Comfort, will barely supply what are deemed the necessary Ornaments and Amusements of Life. Meantime, his Servants are tainted with the Vices of the Town; and it is well if the Morals, even of his Wife and Daughters, are preserved uninjured:—

their Health certainly is not. Then the Sea is ordered : a paltry lodging at Brighton succeeds a paltry lodging in London : his Mansion-house is deserted in Summer as well as Winter ; habits of Indolence are acquired—perhaps, habits of a worse kind, if worse can be ; and he (who was the Support and Ornament of a considerable District ; the fond Parent ; the indulgent Landlord ; the hospitable Neighbour ; the liberal Benefactor ; the respected Magistrate ;) sinks into useless Insignificance and Contempt !

Abandoned by their Owners, our Villages might still have some hope left, if they were not also abandoned by their Pastors ;—by those, whose *bounden Duty* it is to take care of them ; and whose breach of duty has this aggravation, that not *by Descent* (as in the former case), but *by their own solemn Acceptance*, this duty attaches. Far be it from me to speak disrespectfully of the Clergy : I reverence their sacred Office : I look up to them, as the most pious, the most learned, and the most useful Class of all. As Individuals, they must of course vary ; and while some are ably and diligently performing

ing their duty, others alas ! notoriously neglect their's.

It has too long been the false and shallow policy of irreligious and worldly-minded Ministers, to deprive the Clergy of the exercise of those Rights, which they received not from Man ; and which Man, therefore, cannot take from them.

It seems almost forgotten, in these days of novelty, when every thing ancient and venerable is despised ; that Christians are a *regular Society*, formed by CHRIST himself, under Rulers and Officers appointed by him, with authority to appoint others to succeed them : and thus our present Bishops and Clergy derive their Authority by regular Succession from HIM to whom all Power was given, and who, if he had seen fit, could have invested them with temporal Authority also : but this he did not. On the contrary, HE and HIS Apostles, every where, in the most explicit terms, enjoin all Christians to submit like others to their lawful Governors. In *Temporal* Matters, therefore, our Bishops and Clergy possess only such Powers as are given them by the Laws of this Land : but, in all *Spiritual* Concerns, they derive

rive their Authority from *Him by whom Kings reign*, and are bound to exert it for the benefit of that body over whom they are appointed.

With all possible deference, I submit it to the consideration of our Governors, both in Church and State, whether any Society can long flourish, or even exist, without Regulation and Reform? and whether the Church of England can form an exception to this rule: I earnestly entreat them to consider the present state of Religion and Morals in this Kingdom—To consider how impossible it is for *human Laws* to coerce a people, who have lost all sense of the *Divine Law*; who are no longer restrained by the dictates of Conscience; and who, consequently, abstain from no crimes, but such as are prohibited by the Law of the Land,—and from those, only when the danger of Punishment is so apparent, as to overcome the force of corrupt Passions and pampered Appetites! Whatever may be the result of such an inquiry, it surely must be admitted, that the enforcing the *Residence* of our Parochial Clergy is indispensably requisite; and that the times call
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for uncommon exertion in all; especially in those, who have the care of our Principles and our Morals. Never did the Powers of Darkness exert themselves more, or with more success.—Do other Powers exert themselves as much to counteract them? Treason, Sedition, and Mutiny, have appeared; and new Laws have been made to prevent their growth; and we all *feel*, and most of us *acknowledge*, that this was right and fit. But do not Adultery, Gaming, Sabbath-Breaking, Neglect of Public Worship, and above all, Lukewarmness and Indifference about Religion itself, prevail, to a degree unknown in any former age?—to a degree, which seems to portend the eradicating Christianity in this quarter of the World? And where are the Laws against these? Shall I be told that there are such already in our Statute Books? The same was said as to the Laws against Treason and Sedition; but by whom was it said? Was it by those, who wished to prevent such crimes?—or those, who, by their Writings and Speeches, had encouraged them?

In

In the Name, therefore, of that God who made us ; of that SAVIOUR, who died to redeem us ; and of that BLESSED SPIRIT, who is ever ready to assist our weak but *sincere* Endeavours ; I call on every Bishop, Priest, and Deacon, who has devoted himself to the service of God in the Church of England ; to lay aside every Avocation, and instantly to exert his utmost Powers, in the preservation of our holy Religion.—So shall he save many Souls from Death, and hide a multitude of Sins.

If any Lawyers, Merchants, or others engaged in worldly Business, can spare time and thought for one serious Reflection, let that reflection be—*How their Account will stand at the Day of Judgment ?*—how they will then answer, for having joined “ Night to Day, and Sunday to the Week ;” in adding shilling to shilling, and guinea to guinea : instead of pursuing their lawful calling in a lawful manner, and devoting, to the service of God, that portion of their time and thoughts *which he claims ;* and which Claim (if they have a just sense, either of their temporal or eternal interest) they will never more resist.

I now wish to address myself to all the Inhabitants of this Island, but chiefly to those of the *Lower Class*, as it is called :—to those, who have neither Rank or Riches, but must earn their daily Bread by their daily Labour. You, my Fellow-Countrymen, whether you know it or not, have Souls to be saved ; and must live for ever in another World ; and be there rewarded or punished, as you have behaved well or ill in this life. Even here, if you behave ill, you will suffer for it ; and if you behave well, God and good Men will assist you. If you are idle, do you not want Bread ? If you are drunken, do not your Wives and Children suffer ? If you are dishonest, do you not lose your Characters ? If you are honest, and contented, and diligent, do you not find you are happy ? By being *happy*, I don't mean that you have every thing you want, or that you have no sickness or sorrow !—that is such happiness as does not fall to the lot of any body in this World. Whatever you may think, the King upon his Throne has more cares and vexations than you have. Many and many a night, when you are sound
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asleep,

asleep, he and his Ministers are hard at work, for you, and me, and all of us : And the case is the same with the Great and Learned. Some of them, indeed, like some of you, neglect their business, and waste their time in Idleness and Vice ; but others work as hard or harder than you ; and their work is of a worse sort.—Your's *preserves* your health ; while their's *destroys* their health, and shortens their lives. God has so ordered it, that, in this life, no Man shall be *completely* happy ; but most men, let their situation be what it will, may be *tolerably* happy, if it be not their own fault : and every Man may be *completely happy for ever* in another World ; and the same means which will make him happy in another World, will commonly make him comfortable in this.

Let us, then, inquire what those means are : They may be expressed in two short words—

BE GOOD !

God, who made all things, has so made them, that it is impossible for a bad Man to be happy. He has given us Laws, and has promised to reward us if we obey them, and to punish us if we do not. He commands us to love and fear him ;

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to pray to him ; to believe in Jesus Christ his Son ; to honour and obey the King, and all who are in authority under him ; to submit to our Masters, and all lawful Governors. To respect God's Ministers, his Sabbath, and his Church. To pay all their dues, whether Tithes, Taxes, Customs, or other things. To obey the Laws of the Country in which we live. To do to others as we would have them do to us. To love our Neighbours, and assist them as often as it is in our power. To be honest, sober, modest, and decent. To work diligently, in order to get our Living. To bear patiently such Misfortunes as befall us. To be thankful for such good Things as we enjoy ; for our Health, and Strength, and daily Bread, and many other Blessings, which we are too apt not to consider as we ought. They are all the Gifts of God, and ought to be received as such.

Now I would ask any fair Man, if there is any thing hard or unreasonable in all this ? Or whether he is not convinced, that, if we would obey these Laws, we should be much happier than we are ? For, sorry I am to say it, we do not obey

them as we ought. Instead of loving and fearing God, we seldom think of him. Instead of praying to him every night and morning ; some, I fear, never pray at all. Instead of obeying the King, his Magistrates, and his Officers, how many lately have been guilty of insulting him and them ! How many have joined in riotous Mobs, and Seditious Clubs, and Meetings ! How many have held up their hands for rude, unmanly, and disloyal Addresses ! In short, how many have been the dupes of a set of Wretches, who have left no means untried to ruin our Church, our King, and our Country, and make us Slaves to the French !

Instead of respecting God's Ministers and Ordinances, how many abuse the Clergy, seldom go to Church, and spend God's Day in doing their own business, or in jaunting about, or getting drunk ; though it is expressly ordered, that neither we, nor our Servants, nor our Cattle, shall work on that Day ; and that we shall keep it *holy* ! Instead of paying to all their Dues ; how many try to cheat the Clergy of their Tithes, and the King of his Taxes ; and buy smuggled goods whenever they can meet with them ! By
these

these and many such things, they sin at once against the Laws of God, and the Laws of this Land. Who is there that always does as he would be done by?—that never speaks ill of his Neighbour?—that never tries to deceive, or defraud, or over-reach another? How common are Drinking, Lewdness, Gambling; and, above all, profane Cursing and Swearing, which give no pleasure to any Man, and are so offensive to God? How many, who are able to earn a comfortable living, will not work, but live in dirt and rags, wandering about the Country, begging and stealing? How many never thank God for any thing, are never contented, but grumble and complain, even when nothing ails them, and they are not in want? And what makes all this the more unpardonable, is, that we are not sunk in ignorance, as many Nations have been. We have the Bible in our hands, or at least in our houses; and might read it if we would; and if we would read it, we could not fail to know our Duty. But the truth is, most of us *know* our Duty, but wont *do* it.

Is it any wonder then, that God, who is just, should punish us for this? He has given us
such

such good things as no other Nation ever had :
For *I defy any Man to name any People, in any
any Part of the World, in any Period of Time ;
that ever enjoyed such great Blessings and Ad-
vantages, as we now do, or very lately did !*
We have the free exercise of our Religion ; our
Persons and Property are also free. We can go
where we will, and do what we will. And, so
long as we not injure others, nobody can injure
us, without being punishable for it. We live in
a Land of Plenty ; and the poorest person in
it, that is sober and frugal, eats better bread,
and lives in a better habitation, than those of
higher rank in most other Countries. Shew me
the land besides this, where the Labourers ever
eat white Bread, or live in such comfortable
Cottages. Shew me any person in this Island,
who does not live better than his Father did ;
unless he is idle and profligate. We complain
that Bread, Meat, and other things are dear ;
and so they are ; but what is the cause of it ?—
Why, that every body eats more of them than
they used to do. If the Poor lived on Potatoes,
on Oats, on Rye, on Barley, or on Rice, and eat

no Meat (which is the case in the rest of the World); both Bread and Meat would soon be cheap. Not that I want them to live so: *by no means*: I wish they lived still better than they do: but what I want is *this*; that they should not grumble and complain, when they are better off than any other Nation under Heaven. They would deserve all the Wages they have, and more too, if they worked as hard by the *day*, as they do by the *great*; and if they carried all their money to their Wives: but while they carry it to the Alehouse, more wages would be a curse and no blessing.

The Conclusion of the whole is this:—God has blessed this Country beyond all others: We have the best Religion, the best form of Government, and the most plentiful Land, of any People upon Earth: But we have made such a bad use of these blessings, that we are in great danger of losing them. We neglect God, his Service, and his Day. We call ourselves *Christians*, but we hardly know what the word means. Few consider, that every Man, who says he is a Christian, says as follows:—“ I am the Soldier and Servant of Jesus Christ. I have renounced
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all Sin and Wickedness, and all the Vanities of this World. I have owned that I am a Sinner, and that I can only be saved by the Merits and Sufferings of Jesus Christ ; and in order to receive the Benefits of these, I must repent of my Sins ; I must believe in Jesus Christ ; and I must do what he has commanded. His Commands are contained in the Gospel ; I must, therefore, read *that*, in order to learn my Duty ; and, when I have learned it, I must do it faithfully and diligently."

Oh ! my Countrymen ! if we would do this, we should be safe, and happy, and prosperous ! God would make a hedge about us, and about all we have ; and would defend us from all our Enemies ! We should no longer be divided and weakened by Parties and Oppositions ; for we should be all of one mind ; we should all fear God, and honour the King, and love one another, and who would dare to invade us ? Why are we, then, so blind to our interest, as to reject Peace and Prosperity, when we might so easily obtain them ? If you love your Country, if you love your Wives or your Children, if you love
your

yourselves—reform your Conduct before it be too late ! The Judgments of God are in the World : they have fallen upon France, upon Flanders, upon Holland ! They are ready to fall upon us. If we will not take warning from all that has passed, and is now passing, almost at our doors ; we have no excuse, and therefore no room to hope that we shall escape. But, even if we could, what would it avail ? The Day of Judgment *must come* ; when every one who has not repented and reformed, will be condemned to suffer the Torments of Hell for ever ! What those Torments are, we know not ; and God grant we never may ! but, if there be any Truth in the Word of God itself, they are far greater, and more dreadful, than any thing Man ever felt, or can conceive.

LOOK down, O God of all Mercy, on this Land ! Open our eyes, that we may see thy Judgments hanging over our heads and ready to fall on us ! Give us a just sense of our Guilt, and Grace to amend our Lives ; and let our timely

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Repentance make us fit objects of thy Mercy, and prevent the destruction of our Nation.

Bless thy Servant our King, with long Life and Peace. Give true Wisdom to all those who have any share in the Government of our Country ; that they may see and know, that neither our own Arm, nor our own Devices, can save us ; and may learn to look up to Thee, O God of Hosts, for Thine Almighty Aid.

Give a double portion of thy Spirit, to the Bishops and Pastors of thy Church ; that they may devote themselves entirely to thy Service ; boldly rebuke Vice ; and, by their Diligence and Zeal, by the Soundness of their Doctrine, and Holiness of their Lives ; may turn the Hearts of this Nation, from the Lusts of the Flesh, the Vanities of Life, and the desire of earthly Gain, to the Knowledge and Love of Thee and of the Gospel of thy Son.

Grant that those, to whom thou hast committed Wealth, or Power, or Learning, or any useful Talents ; may ever remember from whom they received them, and employ them for the
good

good of all ; that so they may give in their account with joy at the last Day.

And, finally, we beseech Thee, to make us humble and peaceable, sober and diligent, just and merciful ; pious towards thee our God ; loyal to our King, obedient to our Governors, respectful to our Superiors, and kind and affectionate to all Men : That being protected by thy Almighty Power, we may pass our time here in Peace and Comfort ; and be made partakers hereafter of eternal happiness ; through the Merits and Intercession of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ——And let every true Briton say,

AMEN.

P O S T S C R I P T.

SHOULD any one, who has a share in the Legislature or Government of this Land, peruse these Pages, let him reflect seriously how he can answer to God and his Country, for sitting tamely by, without attempting to repress those gross Crimes, which, if suffered to continue, must bring us to Destruction. If he wants *Resolution*, he is unfit for his Station. Let him no longer fear the Scoffs of a few impious Wretches; but uniting with other serious and active Men; and avoiding all Heat and Enthusiasm, on the one hand, and all Lukewarmness and Timidity, on the other; let them consider what are the reigning Vices, and at least attempt to *check* them.

Adultery rages :—and, whilst our Law gives large Damages to the injured *Man*, no atonement

ment whatever is made to our injured *God*!—nay, both He, and his Law, are insulted: for the Adulterer and Adulteress are let go free, and are even allowed to enter into unholy Wedlock. By the Jewish Law, (which was the Law of God,) they were both to die. Under the pure Christian Dispensation, shall they not only escape, but be put on a level with the Virtuous? Surely the Woman, at least, ought to be marked with some personal Infamy; and in no case be permitted to marry again.

Gaming, though not perhaps so direct an Insult on God, is no less pernicious in its effects.—It seems to defy the existing Laws, and therefore calls for new ones.

“Because of Swearing, the Land Mourneth.”
 —“Swear not at all.”—“Above all things, my Brethren, swear not.”—Such are the strong expressions of our Sacred Code. How then can we hope to be excused or pardoned, when we multiply Oaths by every new Law, till they are become almost Words of Course; and have lost all that Reverence which was formerly annexed to them;

them ; and without which, they can only increase our Condemnation.

A Custom-house Oath is already proverbial, and a Tax-Oath is in great danger of becoming so. Were no Oath administered, but in a public Court, by the Judge himself, and with the utmost possible solemnity ; it would impress both the Witness and the Audience with a just sense of its awful nature. In all other cases, the signing a Declaration of the truth of the evidence given, and the justness of the Punishment to be incurred, if it prove false ; would be far more decent, and at least as effectual, as the Oath now administered.

“ Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it HOLY.”—“ In it thou shalt not do *any Work* ; Thou, nor thy Son, nor thy Daughter, thy Man servant, nor thy Maid servant, nor thy Cattle.” —“ Whosoever doth any work on the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death”—Such is *God's Law*. But what is *our Practice* ? Look at our Streets and Roads ; and see them crowded, not merely with the Carriages of the Great, but with Stages full of Travellers, and Waggons loaded

loaded with Goods : Surely when we are distressed for new taxes, a heavy Sunday Toll might be laid throughout the Island ; to check, at least, if we will not prohibit, the gross profanation of the Lord's Day, that fertile source of Immorality. And if no Public Houses, except Inns on great Roads, were suffered to be open on Sundays, it would prevent some Murders, many Roberies, and infinite Mischief.

IF any Person should be inclined to think the present state of Things in this Country, not such as to warrant the Anxiety and Alarm expressed in the preceding Pages : let him read attentively the following Extracts from the Writings of two of the ablest and best men of our Age ; and, having so done, let him consider the Events which have since happened, and the Alteration which has since taken place in our National Principles and Morals ; and then say—What *their* Sentiments would *now* be ?

“ Seldom

" Seldom any State is ruined, but there are
 evident Signals and Presages of it. In general,
 without the Spirit of Prophecy, it is no difficult
 matter to perceive when Cities and Kingdoms
 are tending towards their final Period and Dis-
 solution. There are as certain Tokens and
 Symptoms of a Consumption and Decay in the
 Body Politic, as in the Body Natural. I would
 not presage ill to my Country ; but, when we
 consider the many heinous and presumptuous
 Sins of this Nation ; the Licentiousness, and
 Violation of all Order and Discipline ; the dar-
 ing insolence of Robbers and Smugglers, in
 open defiance of all Law and Justice ; the Fac-
 tions and Divisions ; the Venality and Corrup-
 tion ; the Avarice and Profusion of all Ranks
 and Degrees among us ; the total want of Pub-
 lic Spirit, and ardent passion for private ends
 and interests ; the Luxury and Gaming and
 Dissoluteness in high Life, and the Laziness and
 Drunkenness and Debauchery in low Life ;
 and, above all, that barefaced ridicule of all
 Virtue and Decency ; and that scandalous Ne-
 glect, and I wish I could not say Contempt of
 all

all public Worship and Religion :—When we consider these things, these Signs of the Times, the stoutest and most sanguine of us all must tremble at the natural and probable consequences of them. God give us Grace, that we may *know, at least, in this our day, the things which belong unto our Peace, before they are hid from our eyes.* Never may such blindness happen to us as befell the Jews; but may we *seek the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near; and return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon us, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.*—*Bishop Newton, on the Prophecies, Vol. II. p. 239.*

“ If you behold a Nation distinguished by Irreligion and Contempt of Things Sacred; by Licentiousness, Faction, Luxury, Dissipation, and Effeminacy; be assured that, without a Reformation, and a return to first Principles, the Conquest of that Nation by some other is becoming more and more feasible every day; the same Vices, which provoke Divine Vengeance,

geance, preparing the way for its execution. Such were the characteristics of the ancient People of God, in the times preceding their several captivities. Such was the case, when the old Assyrian Empire perished with Sardanapalus ; when Babylon was surprized by Cyrus ; when Darius was overthrown by Alexander ; when Greece fell under the dominion of the Romans ; when these last were overwhelmed by the Northern Nations, and when Constantinople was taken by the Turks. Every man, who has the prosperity of the Country at heart, should very seriously consider, how far these *Tokens* are to be found upon ourselves ; and what can be done to prevent the farther spreading of the Infection ; and to eradicate the seeds of the Disorder."——*Bishop Horne's Sixteen Sermons, page 162.*